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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY

Bulgaria

SUBJECT

Use Of Ferry Near Vidin/Defense of Railroads And
Bridges/Restriction on Population Movements

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1. During Nov and Dec 53 much grain, especially wheat, barley, and rice were stored on the bank of the Danube River near Vidin. During January 1954 it was transported by means of a ferry from Vidin to Rumania. The same ferry carried also large quantities of canned fruit to Rumania, as well as canned vegetables, marmalades, and fresh beans. The ferry boat has a capacity of ten freight cars. The Bulgarian production went to the USSR via Rumania and only a small amount of goods went to East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Lead and zinc, as well as iron ore which are mined in the Kurdzhali area and in the vicinity of Burgas, are taken by means of special trains via Plovdiv and Sofia to Vidin. From here they go by ferry to Czechoslovakia where they are processed for the Czech war industry. Up until a few months ago these ores were taken to the USSR via the Port of Burgas, but this has changed now, the special trains for Vidin are under heavy guard by militia and by the Party militia.
2. The railroads, Burgas-Plovdiv-Sofia, Khaskovo-Stara Zagora, and the Sofia-Vidin lines are guarded by troops. Ten to 20 soldiers are stationed at each bridge or tunnel along these three railroad lines. In addition to the soldiers there is a railroad guard, which is an auxiliary guard and serves as liaison between posts. This guard uses small cars which run along the railroad lines, when regular trains are not running. Freight trains which carry goods such as ores, coal, tobacco, and uranium ore to the Black Sea harbors of Stalin and Burgas, as well as to the Danube ports of Ruse, Svishtov, Lom, and Vidin, are also guarded by the militia of the Ministry of Interior.
3. Personal passports are in force, but are still not checked. However, every Bulgarian citizen who wishes to leave his home place of employment must report to the local militia section and tell them where he is going, what he is going to do and how long he is going to be gone. If his absence is less than three days permission is not necessary. As soon as a person arrives at his destination he must immediately report to the local militia section. Special open papers, Otkrit List, are issued for border towns by the military authorities and Party secretaries.

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4. Very strict control is exercised in the frontier sectors such as Vidin, Kula, Belogradchik, Bosilegrad, Treklyano, Bokhova, and Trun. Special permission must be received from the military authorities to travel in these areas. Special DCSG (Voluntary Organization for Defense Cooperation) organs headed by Political Commissars from the Ministry of Defense control movement in these sections. Such control is also exercised in the industrial and mining center of Dimitrovo, in the village of Tsurkva, Moshino, and at the dam in the village of Studema. This area has many factories and mines. The workers of the Dimitrovo mines may leave their areas only by permission which is recorded on their personal passports and their personal work cards (rabotnicheskata lichna karta). Without such a permission, a worker is considered a saboteur and is severely punished. A worker without such permission is not allowed to work in another enterprise or factory. He is taken to prison or to a camp for forced labor for re-education.

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